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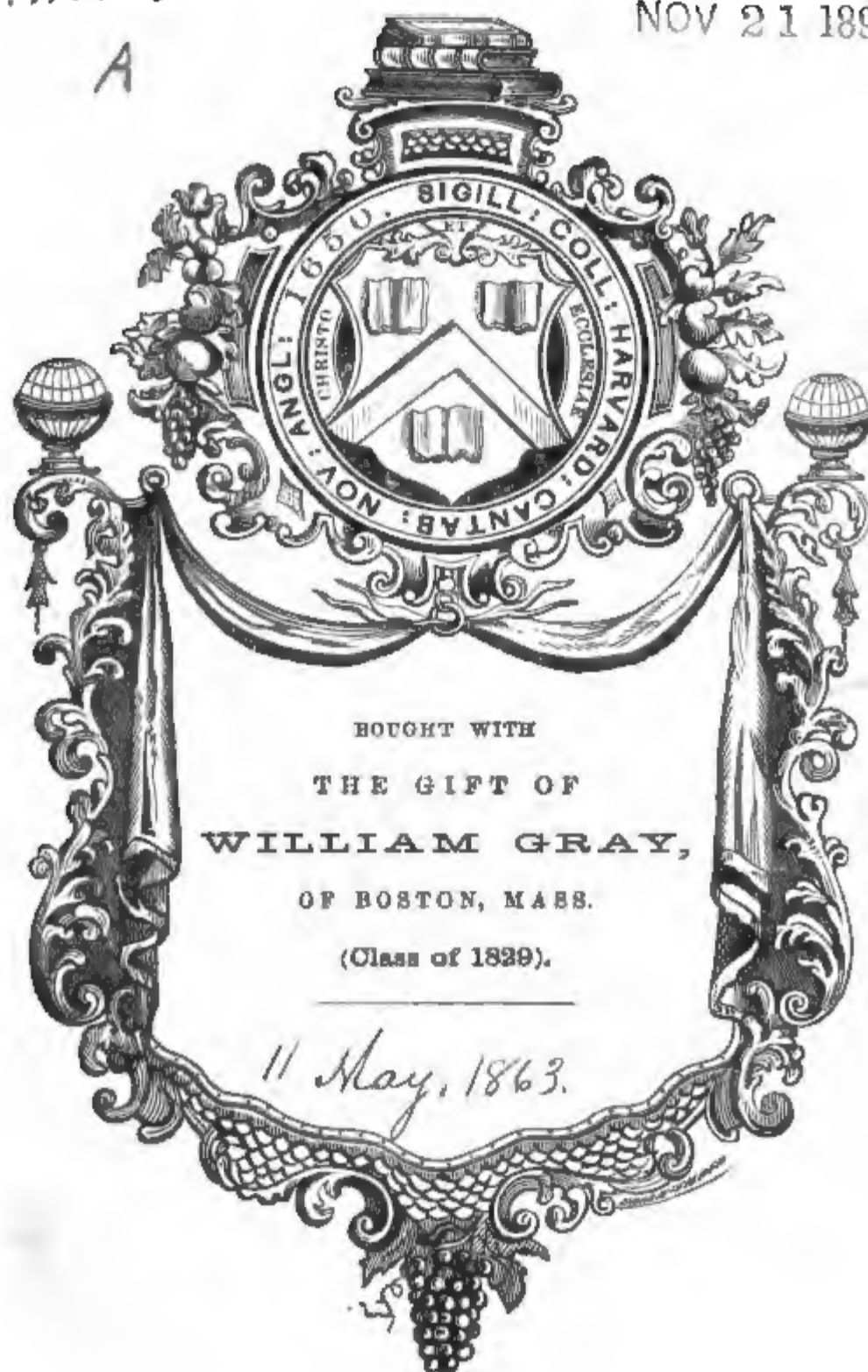




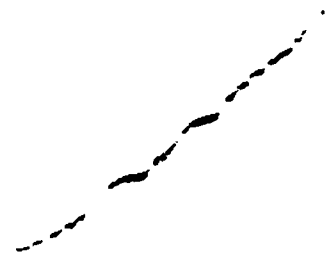
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THE  
FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES,

TRANSLATED BY  
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**THE**  
**FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES.**



## P R E F A C E.

---

IT is with much diffidence that I venture to publish a translation of this singular play. Many of the quotations are from books lost to us, and many of the allusions to persons of whom no other record has survived. What probably drew peals of laughter from a ready audience has nigh baffled the abstruse researches of anxious commentators, who seem to have taken their revenge by calling one another the hardest possible names. Unable to claim any merit of research myself, I have benefited by their labours, and in the case of a disputed passage have always adopted that reading which seemed most probable. Some of the jests are certainly not very refined, but any one acquainted with the original will at once perceive how considerably they have been softened down in the translation, and in one or two instances the real meaning has been altered. I fear much of the wit has evaporated in the process.

C. C. C.

## **CHARACTERS.**

**XANTHIAS.**

**BACCHUS.**

**HERCULES.**

**CORPSE.**

**CHARON.**

**CHORUS OF FROGS.**

**CHORUS.**

**ÆACUS.**

**MAID-SERVANT OF PROSERPINE.**

**LANDLADIES A & B.**

**EURIPIDES.**

**ÆSCHYLUS.**

**PLUTO.**

## THE FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES.

---

[*Enter BACCHUS on foot dressed in the skin of the Nemæan Lion, and the club of Hercules in his hand. —XANTHIAS heavily laden on an ass.*]

*Xan.* SAY, master mine, would you that I should crack  
One of those standing jokes upon the stage  
Which always make the tickled audience laugh?

*Ba.* Say what you will, save that you are “knocked up;”  
Sink that, I pray you, it is threadbare worn——

*Xan.* Ought else you wish? *Ba.* Don’t feign yourself “dead beat.”

*Xan.* May I speak nothing funny? *Ba.* Pooh, man, pooh,  
Pluck up good heart and try, only beware,  
Don’t let me catch you saying this. *Xan.* What’s that?

*Ba.* That you must shift your pack to ease yourself.

*Xan.* Well, may I say, unless some person kind  
Take this tremendous burden off my back,  
Saving your presence, I shall break——good manners?

*Ba.* Not so, unless you wish to make me sick.

*Xan.* Why what the deuce am I, all this to bear,  
And yet may not repeat a single thing  
That Phrynichus and Lycis and Ameipsias  
Put in men’s mouths, when on the boards they stagger  
Beneath great weights? *Ba.* When at the play I hear  
These stale absurdities, I go away  
Just older by a year than when I came.

*Xan.* Alas, poor me ! whose neck is well nigh broken,

Yet must be mum ! *Ba.* Now is not this too bad,

Too glaring insolence, that I, I Bacchus,

Sprung from a hogshead, I would say, from Jove,

Do walk myself, and let this grumbling fellow

Ride on a donkey, which I hired express

To spare his delicate limbs, that he may bear

No single hardship ? *Xan.* Don't I bear ? that's all.

*Ba.* How can you bear ? you ride. *Xan.* Now only look

At what I carry. *Ba.* In what fashion ? *Xan.* Why,

A very weighty fashion, let me tell you.

*Ba.* The weight you carry carries not the ass ?

*Xan.* I should think not ; not what myself I carry.

*Ba.* How can you carry, pray, when you yourself

Are carried by another ? *Xan.* That's a puzzler.

But this I know, my shoulder's plaguy sore.

*Ba.* Well, since you say the ass don't profit you,

Suppose you take your turn, and carry him.

*Xan.* Unhappy wretch ! would I had volunteer'd

And fought at sea, I had my freedom gain'd ;

You then might whistle, but I'd see you first

A long way off. *Ba.* You scoundrel, get you down,

For here are we arriv'd at the first door

Where I must stop.—Ho, porter ! porter there !

*Her.* Who knocks so loud ? the fellow raps away

Proud as a Centaur. Who the deuce are you ?

*Ba.* My lad ! *Xan.* Well, what ? *Ba.* Do you perceive ? *Xan.* No, what ?

*Ba.* How I him frighten'd— *Xan.* Lest you should go mad.

[*Enter HERCULES.*]

*Her.* Ha ha ! I can't help laughing—ha ha ha !

And yet the joke's against myself, but still

I laugh—ha ha ! *Ba.* Good day, my worthy friend ;

I am come here to ask a boon of you.



*Her.* Ha ha !—I can't leave off. Why, when I see  
 The lion's skin thrown o'er the petticoat—  
 What does it mean? and how in fortune's name  
 Have club and buskin in close contact come?  
 Where were your quarters, pray? *Ba.* I was on board  
 Of Cleisthenes. *Her.* And were you at the fight?  
*Ba.* Marry we were, and of the enemy  
 We sank some twelve or thirteen ships. *Her.* You two?  
*Ba.* Aye, by Apollo. *Her.* And just then I woke,  
 And found it all a dream. *Ba.* I was on deck,  
 And reading to myself th' Andromeda,  
 When suddenly a fond desire me seiz'd,—  
 Can you conceive how strong? *Her.* What, very great?  
*Ba.* O not so big, about friend Molon's size.  
*Her.* What for a woman? *Ba.* No. *Her.* A boy? *Ba.* Fie, fie.  
*Her.* A man? *Ba.* Ah, yes! *Her.* What, had you ought to say  
 To Cleisthenes? *Ba.* Come, brother, no bad jokes,  
 This is no laughing matter, I'm quite ill,  
 The passionate desire torments me so.  
*Her.* What is't, my little brother? *Ba.* How can I  
 Explain? well, in a riddle I'll propound.  
 Pray, did you ever feel a sudden wish  
 For marrow pudding? *Her.* Aye, ten thousand times.  
*Ba.* Do I instruct, or must I speak more plain?  
*Her.* Not of the pudding, that I comprehend.  
*Ba.* Well, just so great a wish tormenteth me  
 For my Euripides, although he's dead,  
 And now no mortal shall persuade but that  
 I'll go and look for him. *Her.* What, down to hell?  
*Ba.* To hell, and if there be a lower depth,  
 Then lower still. *Her.* Mercy!—what want you there?  
*Ba.* I want a clever poet, for the race  
 Is now extinct—all who survive are bad.  
*Her.* Indeed! what, is not Iophon alive?

*Ba.* Well, he's the only one who's left us now,  
And, to speak truth, I have my doubts of him.

*Her.* But if you must a poet have, why not  
Take Sophocles before Euripides?

*Ba.* I want to see how Iophon gets on  
Alone, without the help of Sophocles.  
Besides, Euripides is such a fellow,  
I think I easily can him persuade  
To run away; but gentle Sophocles,  
Ever obedient to the laws above,  
Doubtless has not his nature chang'd below.

*Her.* And where is Agathon? *Ba.* Oh, he has left us;  
A poet fair, lamented by his friends.

*Her.* Where has he gone? *Ba.* To realms of happy rest.

*Her.* And where's Xenoclees? *Ba.* O, he be hung!

*Her.* What of Pythangelus? *Xan.* No word of me!  
And all this time my shoulder acheth shrewdly.

*Her.* Sure you must have some young ones coming on,  
Composers of ten thousand tragedies,  
I'll warrant you that they can spin a yarn  
Longer, some furlongs, than Euripides.

*Ba.* These are but offshoots and excrescences,  
A tribe loquacious, that degrade the art,  
Mere twitterings of the swallow, who, if once  
They get a favourable puff of wind,  
A single show in public, quick elate,  
They wing their little flight, then disappear  
For ever: you'll not find a poet craftsman,  
One who'll hit off a noble sentiment.

*Her.* Pray, how do you define a craftsman? *Ba.* Why,  
A man who soars a lofty pitch like this:  
"The mental reservation to an oath,  
"The tongue that swears, consenting not the mind,  
"The airy hall of Jove, or foot of time."

*Her.* This pleases you? *Ba.* Pleases? I rave of it.

*Her.* I think it trash. I'm sure you think so too.

*Ba.* Think for yourself, don't try to tutor me.

*Her.* Well, I repeat, it seems to me sad rubbish.

*Ba.* (Don't teach me to suck eggs! *Xan.* No word of me!)

*Ba.* But to return: this is the reason why

I have made bold to take on me your likeness;

I wish you would inform me who they were

Befriended you, in case I should require

Their aid, when you went after Cerberus:

Describe to me the harbours, bakers' shops,

The stews, the public promenades, the springs,

The roads, the towns, their customs, and the inns

Where there are fewest bugs. *Xan.* No word of me!

*Her.* Why, you rash fellow, will you really go?

*Ba.* Yes, I am quite resolv'd, but tell me, do,

Which of the roads leads quickest down to Hell,

And one that's not too hot, nor yet too cold.

*Her.* Well, let me see, which shall I tell you first?

Aye, here is one—Get you a cord and stool,

And hang yourself. *Ba.* Stop—that's suffocating.

*Her.* Well here's another straight and certain way,

In sooth a right well-pounded way, o'ershadow'd

By the wild thya. *Ba.* Why—you hemlock mean!

*Her.* You've hit it. *Ba.* Ah, that's plaguy cold and cheerless,

Your hands and feet get frozen very soon.

*Her.* Well, shall I tell you of a quick short cut?

*Ba.* Aye, do; to tell the truth, I'm no great walker.

*Her.* Get you to Ceramicus<sup>3</sup>. *Ba.* Well, what next?

*Her.* Climb up unto the top o' the tow'r. *Ba.* What next?

*Her.* Thence you will see the torches lit below;

When the spectators to the race cry "Off!"

Go you off too. *Ba.* Go where? *Her.* Down, to be sure.

*Ba.* Bah! I should smash my skull; no, I wont go

That road. *Her.* How will you go? *Ba.* The road you went.

*Her.* 'Tis a long journey; to a lake you'll come,  
A fathomless abyss! *Ba.* How do I cross?

*Her.* An aged mariner will take you o'er  
In a small boat, and for your fare you'll pay  
Two oboli. *Ba.* Alas, how powerful  
Are those two oboli all the world over!

How came they here? *Her.* Why Theseus introduc'd them;  
And after this you'll see ten thousand snakes  
And terrible wild beasts. *Ba.* Come, come, no tricks  
On travellers, you shall not frighten me.

*Her.* Then a great slough of ever-flowing dung,  
Wherein immers'd lie wretches reft of hope;  
Whoever wrong'd his guest, or of a child  
Dishonest guardian filch'd his ward's estate,  
Or struck his mother, or a father's cheek  
With blow dishonour'd, or forswore his oath,  
Or e'er transcrib'd a page of Morsimus.

*Ba.* Now, by the Gods, add to your list one more,  
Whoever learnt Kinesias' pyrrhic song.

*Her.* Next will you hear the warbling of a pipe,  
And see a shining light, then myrtle groves,  
Whence cull fresh chaplets happy choirs of men  
And women mix'd, who loudly clap their hands.

*Ba.* And who be these? *Her.* These are the Mystic brethren.

*Xan.* By Jove I 'gin to think I am the ass<sup>4</sup>  
That bear the mystic implements for them;  
I like not this, I'll none of it henceforth.

*Her.* And these will tell you all you wish to know,  
For they live close to Pluto's door. And now  
Farewell my brother, and success attend you.

*Ba.* Farewell and thanks.—You, sir, take up again  
The baggage. *Xan.* What, before I've laid it down?

*Ba.* Yes, sir, at once. *Xan.* I pray you, master, hire

One of the gentry brought here on their biers.

*Ba.* Suppose I find none? *Xan.* Then I'll march. *Ba.* That's fair.

Lo in the nick of time they bring a corpse.

Hallo you there!—you, the dead man, I mean;

Will you this baggage take for us to Hell?

*Corpse.* How much is there? *Ba.* Why, this much. *Corpse.* Will you stand

Two drachmas? *Ba.* No, be reasonable, 'tis

A deal too much. *Corpse.* Porters, carry me on.

*Ba.* No, stop a minute, we may strike a bargain.

*Corpse.* Put down two drachmas, or it's no good talking.

*Ba.* Come, take nine oboli. *Corpse.* Nine oboli!

Go to—I'd rather be alive again.

[*Exit.*]

*Xan.* Zounds, what a knave!—a very parlous knave!

Surely he'll groan for this—Well, I'll trudge on.

*Ba.* That's a good fellow, Xanthias; see the lake

He told us of; now I make out the boat.

*Xan.* By Neptune, so do I; and here's old Charon.

*Ba.* Ah Charon, Charon, cheery, cheery Charon!—

*Char.* Who's bound for the retreat from strife and woe?

Who is for Lethe's plain? who comes in hopes

To shear pig's wool? who for the gallows or

For Tænarus<sup>5</sup>? *Ba.* Here, I. *Char.* Then get in quick.

*Ba.* Where think you we shall stop? not at the gallows?

*Char.* Truly I think so, looking at your face.

Get in. *Ba.* Now tumble in my lad, look smart.

*Char.* I will not take the slave, unless indeed

He fought at sea, and risk'd his proper bacon

At that famed battle of the carcasses<sup>6</sup>.

*Xan.* I could not go, I had a bad ophthalmia. . .

*Char.* You must go round and circumvent the lake, .

And wait for us at the Auanian stone.

*Ba.* You hear? *Xan.* O yes, I hear, unhappy wretch!

I must have met the evil eye when I

Left home this morning. *Char.* Sit you to the oar,

If any other passenger is coming

He must make haste—How now? what are you at?

*Ba.* What am I at? why what should I be at?

I sit down on the oar, as you commanded.

*Char.* Come, my fat friend, just you sit there. *Ba.* Look then.

*Char.* Grasp tight the oar, stretch out your hands. *Ba.* Look then.

*Char.* Come, sir, no nonsense; lean your body forward,

And pull; now then, give way, and with a will.

*Ba.* How can I row? I never row'd before—

I never went to sea—I never fought

At Salamis. *Char.* Yet light will be your task;

Once put you off from shore, and you will hear

The most delightful music. *Ba.* Pray from whom?

*Char.* The music of the frogs. *Ba.* Bid them strike up.

*Char.* Yup! yup! yup!—

#### CHORUS OF FROGS.

Brekekekex koax koax,

Brekekekex koax koax,

Children of the marshy lake,

Your choral melody awake,

Now let every tuneful throat

Trickling pour the dulcet note,

Koax koax,

Sing the song which most we love

In praise of Bacchus, son of Jove,

The song we sing, when hot with wine

The people crowd to Limnæ's shrine—

Brekekekex koax koax,

*Ba.* Dear me, this is dreary,

I'm getting quite weary,

My friends koax koax.

*C.* Brekekekex koax koax.

*Ba.* You don't seem much inclin'd

My remonstrance to mind.

*C.* Brekekekex koax koax.

*Ba.* May the foul fiend you seize on,  
And your koax infernal ;  
You say nothing but koax,  
And that seems eternal.

*C.* And with reason, with reason,  
Thou poor silly man,  
Us the Muses admire,  
Who touch the soft lyre,  
And horn-crested Pan,  
Who plays on the flute,  
And the lord of the lute,  
Great Phœbus Apollo,  
He loves us indeed  
On account of the reed,  
Which, slender and hollow,  
For him we preserve in the ponds where we breed.  
Brekekekex koax koax.

*Ba.* The damnable oar  
Has my hands blister'd sore,  
And the work is so heating,  
I am horribly sweating,  
Through every vein porous,  
Soon my stern will join chorus  
In your brekekekex koax koax.  
Now, you race philharmonic, I pray you give o'er.

*C.* Nay, nay, we will sing all the more.  
O if ever before  
On a sunshiny day,  
When we'd skip and would play,  
In the docks and the sedge  
That skirt the lake's edge,  
'Twas our wont to rejoice



In sweet strains of the voice,  
 Or diving and hopping,  
 And splashing and flopping,  
 Or shunning the cloud  
 In the mud to chaunt loud,  
 Making the water to bubble,  
 Be sure now our musical efforts we'll double—  
                     Brekekekex koax koax.

*Ba.* Now your trick I discover,  
 And will make you give over.  
                     koax koax.

*C.* Ah, then should we suffer a destiny curst.

*Ba.* Suffer indeed ! why, I suffer worst,  
 Who am tugging away till I think I shall burst—

*C.*           Brekekekex koax koax.

*Ba.* Croak ye on—for I care not.

*C.* Yes yes, my master,  
 We will cry all the faster,  
 Our throats and our lungs we will spare not—  
                     Brekekekex koax koax.

*Ba.* Me you shall not defeat.

*C.* And you shall not us beat.

*Ba.* Nor you me, I repeat,  
 Though ready to drop  
 I will not once stop,  
 Nor all day hold my peace  
 Till I make you to cease  
                     From brekekekex koax koax.

*Ba.* I think I should have got the best of it  
 And made them stop their koax—Here we are !

*Char.* There, way enough—now bring to with your oar,  
 Get out and pay your fare.   *Ba.* Two oboli.

Why Xanthias—where is Xanthias ? art thou Xanthias ?

*Xan.* Aye aye.   *Ba.* Come hither.   *Xan.* Welcome, master.

*Ba.* What have we here? *Xan.* What have we? slush and darkness.

*Ba.* Pray have you met with any parricides

Or any perjurers? *Xan.* What! have not you?

*Ba.* By Neptune, yes. I think I see some now. [*looking to the audience.*]

Well well, what next? *Xan.* Why, we had best jog on;

This is the place where we shall meet wild beasts,

According to his story. *Ba.* He be hung!

The lying rascal thought to frighten me—

Me, who am the bravest of the brave.

Of all the bragging fellows that I know,

Commend me to that Hercules.—Now I

Should only like to meet with some adventure,

That I might do some gallant feat of arms.

*Xan.* Ha! say you so? I think I hear a noise.

*Ba.* Where, where is it? *Xan.* Behind. *Ba.* Get you behind then.

*Xan.* But no, it is in front. *Ba.* Get you in front then.

*Xan.* And now, by Jove, I see a monstrous beast.

*Ba.* What like? *Xan.* O horrible! most horrible!

But see, it changes, takes all kinds of shapes,

Now 'tis a bull, and now a mule, and now

A lovely woman. *Ba.* Woman? I'll go meet her.

*Xan.* No longer 'tis a woman, but a bitch.

*Ba.* Why this must be Empusa. *Xan.* Ah! her face

Glow's like a coal. *Ba.* Has she a leg of bronze?

*Xan.* By Neptune, yes—the other is a donkey's.

*Ba.* Woe's me! where shall I fly? *Xan.* And where shall I?

*Ba.* Preserve me, my own priest, let me once more

The flagon drain, and be thy boon companion.

*Xan.* O! we are lost, my royal Hercules.

*Ba.* For goodness' sake, don't call me by that name.

*Xan.* Well, Bacchus then. *Ba.* And that is worse than t'other.

*Xan.* Well, never mind, come on, my noble master.

*Ba.* What do you mean? *Xan.* Be of good cheer, all's well,

And we may say as says Egelochus,

"Lull'd are the waves, I spy a calm again."

Empusa's vanish'd. *Ba.* Will you swear? *Xan.* By Jove.

*Ba.* Swear it again. *Xan.* I swear by Jove. *Ba.* Again.

*Xan.* By Jove I swear. *Ba.* Well, I grew rather pale,

But you blush'd scarlet; *that's* the sign of fear.

Oh, this is a sad life, and full of woes.

Now which of all the Gods shall I accuse

Of compassing my death? say, shall it be

"The airy hall of Jove, or foot of time?" [*Sound of a pipe is heard.*]

*Xan.* Hallo! *Ba.* What is it? *Xan.* Don't you hear? *Ba.* No, what?

*Xan.* I hear a pipe. *Ba.* And now you mention it,

I think I smell a most mysterious smell,

As if of torches burning—Best keep quiet.

*Ch.* Iacchus lord, Iacchus dear,

Iacchus, O Iacchus, hear!

*Xan.* Why, master, these must be the mystic brethren

He told us of; they to Iacchus' sing

The song Diagoras compos'd. *Ba.* No doubt,

But best keep quiet,—we'll hear more anon.

*Ch.* Iacchus, O most honour'd God,

That hous'd in costly rich abode

Here hast fix'd thy chosen home,

Iacchus, O Iacchus, come;

Gaily to the mead advance,

Lead us to the choric dance,

Thy head with myrtle blossoms crown'd,

With free and fearless footstep bound,

Teach us how with wonted state

These ancient rites to celebrate,

Rites we hold most justly dear,

Rites which we shall aye revere.

*Xan.* O Ceres' holy daughter, what a whiff

Came of roast pork delicious to my nostrils!

*Ba.* Won't you keep quiet, sirrah? you may chance

To get some tripe, and with an S before it.

*Ch.* Toss on high the torches bright,  
 Gleaming ruddy through the night.  
 Thou com'st, Iacchus, from afar  
 Shedding glory, like some star  
 On the robe of Evening sparkling,  
 And the mead, but lately darkling,  
 Kindling at thy shouted name,  
 Glows a sea of living flame.  
 Lo, old men at sight of thee  
 Forget their cares and misery,  
 Smitten with a sacred rage  
 They shake off the sloth of age.  
 But thou, O thou, in form and face  
 Radiant with immortal grace,  
 Marshal thou upon the plain  
 Thy chosen ones, thy youthful train,  
 Flush'd with joy and ripe for pleasure,  
 Lead them to the choric measure.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Away, away ! he had best not stay, but far hence let him flee,  
 The cold of heart, who hath no part in our chaste mystery,  
 Who does refuse, when holds the Muse her sports, to gladly greet her,  
 Nor can rehearse thy Bacchic verse, Cratinus, great bull-eater,  
 Who loves to harp, at words to carp of fellow-citizen,  
 Nor will compose the feud of foes, nor loves his brother men,  
 But still is rife for broil and strife, and seeks his private greed,  
 Or of the state a magistrate is basely brib'd and fee'd,  
 If one there be, by land or sea, who his sworn trust betrays,  
 At Ægina<sup>s</sup> Thorycion—like the tricks of office plays,  
 Who merchandise and war supplies to Epidaurus sends,  
 Or on the sea the enemy with secret aid befriends,  
 I warn him off, who dares to scoff at rites of Hecate ;

Whoe'er may judge it fit to grudge the bard his hard-earn'd fee,  
 I warn him twice, I warn him thrice, to leave our social throng ;  
 But you, my friends, until night ends, lift high the festive song.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Blithely now our band advancing  
 On the flow'ry fields is dancing,  
 Full of jests and quips and fun,  
 For our holiest rites are done.  
 Stay a-while—the hymn upraise  
 To our guardian Goddess praise,  
 Our own dear Goddess, who will guard us still  
 Let Thorycion plot and fume as he will—

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Again, again, another strain, for we must now salute  
 In fashion other great Ceres' mother, who gives us corn and fruit.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Ceres, mistress of our revel,  
 Shield us from all harm and evil ;  
 Bid me still, devoid of care,  
 In thy genial banquet share ;  
 Bid me still, without alloy,  
 Quaff the brimming cup of joy.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

On the youthful God now call,  
 Bid him grace our festival.  
 Great Iacchus, hither haste,  
 And the honied banquet taste,  
 Shew us how, without fatigue<sup>9</sup>,  
 The road t' accomplish, many a league  
 Although it be ; with jest and laughter  
 Lead us on, we'll follow after.

Sweet Iacchus, deign to be  
Of our joyous company.

## ONE OF THE CHORUS.

Look here at this cloak, it is tatter'd and torn,  
And look here at this sandal, in holes it is worn ;  
This was done, O Iacchus, in honour of thee ;  
Then join, sweet Iacchus, O join company.—  
I tell you, just now, I took a sly glance  
At a pretty companion, next me in the dance,  
Her zone it had snapp'd, and all loose was her vest,  
So I caught a nice peep of her young budding breast.

*Xan.* Well, I for my part like good fellowship,  
And I should not object to take a turn  
With that young damsel. *Ba.* Nor in truth should I.

## CHORUS.

Archedemus <sup>10</sup> now jeer,  
In his full seventh year,  
No pretence to a voice has the upstart outlandish,  
Yet he gives himself airs,  
And those poor folks upstairs,  
Who fancy they live, does he fawn on and blandish.  
And Cleisthenes—hark !  
O'er his friend stiff and stark  
Rends his rump with his claws, full of sorrow and rage,  
For Sebinus, that beast,—  
Callias last, but not least,  
In a lion's skin drest, who went battle to wage.

*Ba.* My friends, can you tell  
Where one Pluto does dwell ?  
Two strangers are we, who this country explore—

*Ch.* Why, then, my good sir,  
From this spot do not stir,  
For know that you stand at his very house-door.

*Ba.* Come, come, take up your traps. *Xan.* Why, what means this?  
Have we Jove's Corinth<sup>11</sup> stow'd away inside?

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Let us form in a ring,  
Let us dance, let us sing,  
On the flowery mead  
Lightly tread, lightly tread,  
With maidens and dames,  
Come and feed the chaste flames  
That through the long night  
On the altar burn bright.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Away, yes away,  
To the meads painted gay  
With flowers there blooming,  
The soft air perfuming,  
There form we our chorus,  
Kind Fates watching o'er us,  
For us only the sun  
His full glory puts on;  
For us only is lighted  
More brilliant the sky,  
Freemen, strangers, united  
By mystical tie.

460 *Ba.* Now how ought I to knock? pray tell me how?  
How do the natives of this country knock?  
*Xan.* Come, don't waste time, but just you try the door,  
And do remember that you now support  
Th' Herculean character. *Ba.* Ho! porter, porter!  
Wake up. *Æac.* Who is it? *Ba.* Hercules the strong.  
*Æac.* O impious, daring, and most shameless wretch,  
O villain, double villain, damn'd arch-villain,



'Twas you who came before, and stole my dog,  
 Poor Cerberus ! you seiz'd him, gagg'd, and then  
 Ran off with him—but now we have you fast,  
 Fast as black Styx, and rock of Acheron  
 Dripping with gore of criminals, can hold you ;  
 The hounds of Cocytus we'll set on you ;  
 Her hundred heads shall the Echidna rear,  
 And tear your entrails ; the Tartesian Fury  
 Shall fasten on your loins, and lap your blood ;  
 Your kidneys shall be given this night for supper  
 To the Tithrasian Gorgons. I'll go fetch them.

*Xan.* What have you done ? *Ba.* Done it : I could not help it.

Call on your Gods. *Xan.* O most contemptible !

Will you not hence, before some stranger sees

Your shameful plight ? *Ba.* O ! I am very ill ;

Get out the sponge, and place it next my heart.

*Xan.* Here. *Ba.* Please apply it. *Xan.* Where ? O golden Gods !

Is't there you have your heart ? *Ba.* Poor flutt'ring thing,

It sunk through fright right down below my stomach.

*Xan.* 'Mid Gods and men you surely are the pink

Of cowardice. *Ba.* A coward ? I ? how so ?

Did I not ask the sponge of you ? a coward

Would not have acted thus. *Xan.* What would he do ?

*Ba.* He would have lain down flat, and smelt unpleasant—

I stood upright and boldly wip'd myself.

*Xan.* A manly act, by Neptune. *Ba.* Faith, I think so.

But tell me, don't *you* feel at all afraid

At his fierce menace ? *Xan.* Pshaw ! I heed him not.

*Ba.* Well, just suppose, you are so lion-hearted,

That we change parts ; take you my club and skin,

And I will be the servant. *Xan.* As you please,

Only be quick about it ; I consent.

Now look upon the Xanthian Hercules,

And see if he will prove poltroon like you.

*Ba.* I think you'll be more like his whipping-boy,  
The scapegrace slave that acts his character  
At Melite : here, change, I'll take the pack.

[*Enter* FEMALE SERVANT OF PROSERPINE.]

*Serv.* O dearest Hercules, art thou arriv'd ?  
When heard my mistress you were come, she sent  
And bade them bake new bread, and to dish up  
Two or three marrow puddings ; and an ox  
Is to be roasted whole, and they prepare  
Some pastry and light comfits :—pray come in.

*Xan.* I am most sensible of all her kindness.

*Serv.* By Phœbus, I am not to let you go  
Out of my sight ; and I forgot to say  
She had put down to roast some ortolans ;  
And there are cheesecakes for dessert, and wine  
Of the best quality ; so pray come in  
With me. *Xan.* I shall be charm'd. *Ba.* You speak in jest ;  
I shall not let you go. *Serv.* There is besides  
A fair musician who will play to you  
Upon the lute, and also dancing girls  
Some two or three. *Xan.* How say you ? dancing girls ?

*Serv.* Yes, very pretty ones, new come of age.  
Enter ; the cook is just about to take  
The spits from 'fore the fire—the table's spread.

*Xan.* Go you along, and tell the dancing girls  
I'll pay them first a visit : follow, slave,  
Bring on my baggage. *Ba.* Stop, you fellow, stop ;  
You don't suppose that I in earnest was  
When I in fun let you be Hercules.  
No nonsense, Xanthias ; reassume your pack.

*Xan.* What ? sure you don't intend to take away  
Your own free gift ! *Ba.* I don't intend, but do it.  
Strip off the hide. *Xan.* I call the Gods to witness !

*Ba.* What Gods, forsooth? are you so mad to think  
That you, a serf and mortal, could pass off  
For great Alcmena's son? *Xan.* Well, never mind,  
No, never mind, I say; may the time come  
When you again my help require—that's all. [*they change again.*]

## CHORUS.

This is truly the part  
Of a man shrewd and smart,  
Who has travell'd, I think, and don't let his wits sleep:  
You are no stupid block,  
To stand still like a stock,  
But when the boat heels, you the weather side keep.

*Ba.* It were too good a jest,  
To let my slave, drest  
Like a prince, go to court, and carouse as my proxy.  
Just my feelings suppose,  
If right under my nose  
I saw the young scamp kiss and toy with his doxy;  
Or if, after dining,  
At full length reclining,  
He coolly me bade for the chamber-pot go,  
With a hint to be quick,  
Or he'd give me a kick,  
Or knock out my front teeth with a backhanded blow.

[*Enter LANDLADIES A. and B.*]

*Landlady A.* Why, Plathane, good Plathane, look here!  
Behold the thief, that came unto our inn  
And eat eleven loaves. *Landlady B.* By Jove, 'tis he  
Himself. *Xan.* Some one is in for squalls, I think.  
*L. A.* And twenty plates of beef, each charg'd at half  
An obolus. *Xan.* Some one will catch it now.  
*L. A.* Item, A quantity of garlic. *Ba.* Sure

You joke, good woman ;—I don't understand.

*L. A.* What ! do you think, because you buskins wear,

I do not recognise you ? *L. B.* I've not yet  
Mention'd the pickled fish this wretch devour'd ;  
And the new cheese he bolted, jar and all.

Then, when I shew'd the bill, and payment ask'd,  
He look'd straight in my face, and gave a belch.

*Xan.* Ah, his old tricks, 'tis his way everywhere.

*L. B.* Then like a madman did he draw his sword.

*Xan.* Dear, dear ! poor woman ! *L. B.* We so frighten'd were,

We ran upstairs for shelter ; he at once  
Took to his heels, and carried off our rugs.

*Xan.* Ah, his old tricks :—but did you take no steps ?

*L. A.* But now my patron Cleon <sup>12</sup> will I call.

*L. B.* Aye, do, and if you meet Hyperbolus,

Fetch him for me ;—we'll grind the wretch to powder.

*L. A.* Detested mouth ! how gladly with a stone

Would I those gums bemaule that ate my cheer !

*L. B.* O, I could throw him in the deepest pit.

*L. A.* And I should like to take a scythe, and slice

The throat that swallow'd my good things :—but soon  
Will Cleon come, and serve him out for all.

*Ba.* Now may I die, but, Xanthias, I do love you.

*Xan.* I know, I know ; but stop, no more of that ;

I won't be Hercules again. *Ba.* Now list,

My little Xanthias. *Xan.* What ! you can't suppose

That I, a serf and mortal, could pass off

For great Alcmena's son ? *Ba.* I know full well

That you are angry, and you have good cause.

Beat me ; I'll not reply a word to you :

But if again I e'er deprive you of

Your dress, may I be cut off root and branch !

May I myself, my wife, my children perish,

And blear-ey'd Archedemus, all together !

*Xan.* Well, I accept the oath, and on these terms  
I will consent to do it : let us change.

## CHORUS.

Now again 'tis your turn,  
Like the God, to look stern ;  
The business is black, but put on a good face.  
Things look ill at present,  
But if any thing pleasant  
Turn up, then I guess you'll resume your old place.

*Xan.* You say very well,  
And his tricks right you spell,  
In such case no doubt he would try to supplant me ;  
But I am not afraid,  
Like my master dismay'd,  
These bullies and bugbears shall not easy daunt me.

[*Enter ÆACUS.*]

*Æac.* Bind this dog-stealer, that I may inflict  
Due punishment. *Ba.* Some one will catch it now.

*Xan.* Get out—go to the devil—don't come here.

*Æac.* What, you shew fight ? O monstrous ! Ditylas,  
Skeblias, and Pardocas, come quick, and fight  
This ruffian. *Ba.* Hard and cruel, is it not,  
To beat a man, because he merely stole  
Another's goods ? *Xan.* 'Tis quite unnatural.

*Æac.* O, very hard ! *Xan.* Now may I die, if e'er  
I came before, or stole a thing of yours  
Worth a hair's value : and to prove it plain,  
I'll fairly act and handsomely with you <sup>13</sup>.  
Here, take this slave of mine, and torture him,  
And if you find I ever did you wrong,  
I'll give you leave to take me too, and kill me.

*Æac.* How may I torture him? *Xan.* How? every way;  
 Tie him up to a ladder, flog him well,  
 Flay him alive, twist him, pour vinegar  
 Into his nostrils, pile up loads of bricks  
 And squeeze him to a mummy; and in fine,  
 Each sep'rate mode of torture try but this,—  
 Don't beat him with a leek or turnip-top.

*Æac.* A truly liberal offer! only if  
 I chance to maim him, you'll come down on me  
 For compensation. *Xan.* No, in faith, not I.  
 Take him away, and freely torture him.

*Æac.* No, I will do it here; before your eyes  
 Shall he confess. Come, sir, put down your pack,  
 And strip—and see you tell no lies. *Ba.* Avaunt!  
 I warn you, wretch! lay not an impious hand  
 On an immortal God. *Æac.* What do you say?

*Ba.* I say that I am Bacchus, son of Jove,  
 And he my slave. *Æac.* You hear? *Xan.* I hear, and say,  
 So much more reason that he should be scourg'd.  
 Why, if he is a God, he will not feel.

*Ba.* And you pretend you are a God yourself:  
 Come then, take your fair share of blows with me.

*Xan.* Agreed, agreed! whichever of us two  
 You first see wince, or utt'ring cry of pain,  
 You may be sure that *he* is not the God.

*Æac.* Well, God or not, you are an honest fellow,  
 Straight to the point you come. Now strip you both.

*Xan.* How will you fairly judge? *Æac.* O, easily;  
 I'll give you blow and blow alternate. *Xan.* Good!  
 Now mark you well, and see if I do wince.

*Æac.* Why, I have struck! *Xan.* No, I felt nothing. *Æac.* No?  
 Well, so it seems: and now for him. *Ba.* When, when?

*Æac.* Why, I have struck! *Ba.* Pooh, pooh, I should have sneez'd.

*Æac.* 'Tis odd: and now for him again. *Xan.* Be quick.

I-attatai<sup>14</sup>! *Æac.* Ha, ha! what's attatai?

You are in pain? *Xan.* O no, I only mus'd

Of the Herculean games at Diome.

*Æac.* A holy man!—and now again for you.

*Ba.* I—o! I—o! *Æac.* What now? *Ba.* I see some knights.

*Æac.* But your eyes fill with tears. *Ba.* Because I smell

Some onions. *Æac.* And you nothing felt? *Ba.* O no!

*Æac.* Well, in that case, I must try him once more.

*Xan.* Ah me! *Æac.* What is it? *Xan.* Please pull out this thorn.

*Æac.* O, that is all!—it is your turn again.

*Ba.* Pythian Apollo, lord of Delos' isle.

*Xan.* He caught it then; did you not hear him groan?

*Ba.* Not I,—I was but quoting to myself

A verse of Hipponax which I remember'd.

*Xan.* O you do nothing, hit him in the guts.

*Æac.* That's good advice! have at your belly, sir.

*Ba.* Neptune! *Xan.* O then he felt it, I am sure.

*Ba.* That by the *Ægean*

Wave-wash'd promontory

Dost abide, and controllest

The ocean's realm hoary.

*Æac.* I swear by Ceres that I can't discover

Which of you is the God: but come you in,

Pluto and Proserpine will soon find out,

For they are Gods themselves. *Ba.* You speak good sense;

I only wish that you had thought of that

Before you gave me those confounded blows.

#### CHORUS.

Gentle muse, inspire my song;

When the crowd the forum throng,

Wisdom, teach them how to shun

The counsels dark of Cleophon,



On whose lips, whence issue lies,  
 The Thracian <sup>15</sup> swallow chiding cries.  
 Sad as her sister Philomel,  
 Does she his coming doom foretell.  
 Although the votes well balanc'd be,  
 He shall not 'scape his destiny <sup>16</sup>.

[*Enter XANTHIAS and ÆACUS.*]

*Æac.* By Jupiter, our guardian God, I swear,  
 Your master is a right true gentleman.

*Xan.* In course he is a right true gentleman,  
 He's nothing else to do but whore and drink.

*Æac.* Nay, but I mean he never hit you once,  
 Although detected in the bare-fac'd lie,  
 That you, a slave, had feign'd yourself the master.

*Xan.* Hit me, indeed ! I'd like to see him do it.  
 He would have smarted for't. *Æac.* Well, this you did  
 Like a true serving-man. O, I rejoice  
 When I act thus. *Xan.* And how rejoice you, pray ?

*Æac.* Myself I liken to an officer,  
 Inspector of most solemn mysteries,  
 When I my master curse behind his back.

*Xan.* How do you feel, when, being soundly thrash'd,  
 You run fresh from your beating out of doors,  
 And grumble there ? *Æac.* Then am I pleas'd. *Xan.* And why,  
 You silly fellow, why ? *Æac.* O, I don't know.

*Xan.* Ancestral Jove, a pretty varlet this !  
 And when you listen to your master's talk ?

*Æac.* I go nigh mad. *Xan.* And when you this repeat  
 To folks abroad ? *Æac.* I 'almost swoon with joy.

*Xan.* Phœbus Apollo ! give me thy right hand,  
 Let me it kiss, and kiss thou me again.  
 But stay ; by Jupiter I conjure thee—

That Jupiter who once was whipp'd like us—

What does this row and awful tumult mean ?

*Æac.* O, 'tis Euripides and *Æschylus*.

*Xan.* Indeed ! *Æac.* Great, great, the business being stirr'd,  
A fierce contention reigns among the dead.

*Xan.* Explain. *Æac.* There is a custom here below,  
Touching all arts of great and fair repute,  
That he who's reckon'd captain of his craft  
Should in th' assembly have, as president,  
The chair next Pluto— *Xan.* Well, I understand.

*Æac.* Until there come some wiser in the art  
Than he, and then must he give up. *Xan.* And how  
Does this give trouble unto *Æschylus* ?

*Æac.* Why, he possess'd the chair of tragedy,  
As the superior in that line. *Xan.* And now — ?

*Æac.* Why, when Euripides came here below,  
He soon held forth to all the cut-purse knaves,  
Pickpockets, burglars, parricides, of whom,  
To speak the truth, there is an ample crowd  
In hell : these giving careful ear unto  
His fetches, reasonings, and arguments,  
Became enamour'd, and went raving mad.  
They hail'd him wisest : quick elate at this,  
He seiz'd upon the chair where *Æschylus*  
Was wont to sit. *Xan.* And was he not kick'd out ?

*Æac.* No, no, the crowd cried out to have a ring,  
And trial make which was the better man.

*Xan.* The crowd of rascals ? *Æac.* Aye, they cried so loud,  
They made the welkin vibrate with their noise.

*Xan.* Had *Æschylus* no backers on his side ?

*Æac.* Yes, a small party, but the most select.

*Xan.* And Pluto, how is he prepar'd to act ?

*Æac.* O, he declares that they may have the fight.

*Xan.* How came it Sophocles claim'd not the throne ?

*Æac.* Not he, by Jove, but he kiss'd *Æschylus*  
 When he arriv'd, put his right hand in his,  
 And waiv'd his own pretensions to the chair.  
 Now he's about, so says *Cleidemides*,  
 To act as second ; and if *Æschylus*  
 Prevail, he will retire, if not, himself  
 The lists will enter with *Euripides*.

*Xan.* Will it be soon ? *Æac.* Almost directly, then  
 A terrible commotion will there be,  
 When poesy is by the pound retail'd.

*Xan.* Why, what the deuce, will they weigh poetry ?

*Æac.* Aye, that they will, yard-measures too they'll bring,  
 And cubit-rules for words, then plaster them,  
 As they make bricks, in squares and oblong shapes,  
 With compasses to draw diametres,  
 Wedges to boot : *Euripides* declares  
 That word by word he'll test each tragedy.

*Xan.* I should not think that *Æschylus* was much  
 Inclined to play the civil. *Æac.* No, he bent  
 A low'ring look, like to an angry bull.

*Xan.* And who's the judge ? *Æac.* Faith, that was hard ; you'll find  
 A scarcity of learned men below.

Why, *Æschylus* did not th' Athenians suit.

*Xan.* Perhaps he thought them most a blackguard set.

*Æac.* He held they were a race too frivolous  
 To judge of the poetic nature : so  
 Upon your master they for umpire fix'd,  
 For he has much experience in the art.  
 But let us jog ; when masters are in haste,  
 We slaves, you know, don't always come best off.

#### CHORUS <sup>17</sup>.

See, the bard of mind vivid is with anger quite livid,  
 The eyes in his head are like fireballs glaring ;

His fury in vain will he try to restrain,  
When he catches a sight of his rival him daring.

Now his phrases high-prancing, with crests gaily dancing,  
Come forth to contend in their war-array splendid,  
With the nice sentence-fittings, and the subtle hair-splittings,  
In order of battle right cunningly blended.

The long hair on his forehead, like a mane bristling horrid,  
One pours forth, contracting his eyebrow defiant,  
His words rolling thunder, hind'rance cleaving asunder,  
As through the rent forest careers the storm-giant.

Then his shrewd adversary, a critic full wary,  
And wielding the glibbest, most practis'd of tongues,  
Will attempt a detection and minutest dissection  
Of the diction sonorous, sorely tasking the lungs.

*Eur.* I will not yield the chair, don't think it; I  
Do boast myself superior in the art.

*Ba.* Why art thou silent, Æschylus? thou hear'st?

*Eur.* Nay, first with solemn face will he revolve  
Unto himself those monstrous sentences,  
Like nothing human, which, in ev'ry play  
Of his, his characters are wont to hatch.

*Ba.* Come, my good sir, don't blow your horn too loud.

*Eur.* I know him well, and long my mind's made up.  
He is a man of wild and headlong speech,  
No curb puts he upon his tongue, but vents  
Discourse bombastic, unpronounceable.

*Æsch.* Child of the rustic Goddess, say'st thou so?  
Dar'st thou say this to me? thou chatter-box,  
Beggar-compounder, tatterdemalion's mate,  
Thou shalt repent it. *Ba.* Softly, Æschylus,

Don't suffer anger thus to vex your reins.

*Æsch.* I will not cease before I make it plain,

This cripple-losel's friend's impertinence.

*Ba.* An ewe, black ewe, bring, boys, and sacrifice <sup>18</sup>,

Here's the typhoon will burst on us anon.

*Æsch.* Thou ballad-monger, thou collector vile

Of Cretic ditties, that presum'st to bring

Incestuous marriages into the art !

*Ba.* Restrain yourself, most valued *Æschylus* :

And you, you rogue Euripides, look out ;

Out of this hailstorm quick, if you are wise,

Remove yourself ; lest with some stunning word

Your pate he hit, and knock clean out of it

All recollection of your Telephus.

And don't give way to anger, *Æschylus*,

But argue gently, gently state your case ;

Convince, or be convinc'd : it is not fit

Nor proper that two poets should abuse

Each other like she-baker-prentices.

But you are so impetuous,—catch a spark,

You blaze and roar like ilex-wood on fire.

*Eur.* I am prepar'd, and do not shrink from it,

To bring to open proof my words, my strains,

The very sinews of a tragedy.

By Jove, by Peleus, and by *Æolus*,

I this do swear, by Meleager too,

And loftier oath, by my own Telephus.

*Ba.* And what wish you to do ? Speak, *Æschylus*.

*Æsch.* I have no wish to join in battle here ;

The combat will not be on equal terms.

*Ba.* How so, I pray ? *Æsch.* My poetry survives ;

It did not die with me, as his has done

With him ; he has his stock at hand : but still,

If so it please you, I'll encounter him.

*Ba.* 'Tis well: now flame and incense mix, ye two,  
 And I myself will offer up a prayer  
 That I may judge this action worthily:  
 And you your voices to the Muses raise.

## CHORUS.

Hear, ye Muses, virgin nine,  
 Daughters of Jupiter divine,  
 Ye who with your piercing ken  
 Scan the secret thoughts of men,  
 When for contest keen inclin'd  
 They closely grapple, mind with mind;  
 Hither from your mount descend,  
 And to each the weapons lend  
 Wherewithal he's wont to fight,  
 To him the epithets of might,  
 To him nice quirks and quilllets, fine  
 As sands that in the hour-glass shine.  
 Vast the quarrel, great the prize,  
 In ardour either champion vies.

*Ba.* Now pray you both before you do begin.

*Æsch.* Ceres, that didst of yore my mind inspire,  
 O make me worthy of thy mysteries!

*Ba.* Now you too take and offer incense. *Eur.* Aye,  
 But I have other gods to whom I pray.

*Ba.* What! do you mean to say, you counterfeit,  
 That you have private Gods? *Eur.* Yea, verily.

*Ba.* Well, pray away to your own private Gods.

*Eur.* Thou air, from whence my vital sustenance  
 I draw, thou organ of my tongue, thou mind,  
 And, O ye nostrils, wherewithal I smell,  
 Grant me to conquer with the words I choose!

## CHORUS.

Earnestly do we desire  
 To hear these sages rous'd to ire.  
 Now no puny war is waging,  
 Now no tyro minds engaging.  
 We look for something neatly pointed,  
 Well put together, dovetail-jointed,  
 From the former; then the latter,  
     As a furious tempest raging,  
 All his rival's flimsy matter  
 Like chaff before the wind will scatter.

*Ba.* Well, now be quick, don't stand stock-still, but speak.  
 See your discourse be witty, nowise stale.

*Eur.* Well, of myself and my poetic merits  
 I will make mention last: but firstly, him  
 I'll prove a gross impostor and a cheat.  
 He took the clowns that Phrynichus had rear'd  
 In hand; with these the public he deceiv'd.  
 First, a veil'd character he'd forward put,  
 Achilles, or a Niobe perhaps,  
 Or some one else; he never shew'd the face,—  
 A mere lay-figure in a tragedy,  
 A dummy, that ne'er spoke a syllable.

*Ba.* Aye, aye? *Eur.* And then the chorus bellow'd out  
 Four long successive cantos: all this time  
 Strict silence kept the proper characters.

*Ba.* And I delighted in their silence; more  
 It pleas'd me than your talkers nowadays.

*Eur.* You were a fool then. *Ba.* Well, perhaps I was.  
 Why did he this? *Eur.* Out of pure arrogance;  
 He lik'd to keep the audience in suspense,

Waiting to hear what Niobe would say.

*Ba.* Ah villain ! how did he impose on me !

Why do you yawn impatient ? *Eur.* Him I wish

Full to convict. When he had trifled thus,

And the play was nigh over, then at last

Would he rap out some dozen thund'ring words,

With eyebrows, locks, and hideous visages

Unknown unto the public. *Æsch.* Woe is me,

Unhappy ! *Ba.* Hush ! *Eur.* Yet nothing spoke he plain——

*Ba.* Don't gnash your teeth. *Eur.* But something of Scamander,

Or trenches, or reclining on their shields

Wyverns, in shining mail of beaten brass,

A team of runaway neck-breaking words,

Not easy, faith, to drive in harness. *Ba.* Jove !

Oft have I lain awake at night in bed ;

Musing upon the tawny hippogriff,

What sort of bird it was. *Æsch.* Why, frequently

'Tis us'd as figure-head unto our ships <sup>19</sup>.

*Ba.* Well, I had always thought it was Eryxis,

Philoxenus's son. *Eur.* But why at all

A dragon in the drama introduce ?

*Æsch.* Detested wretch ! what introduc'd not you ?

*Eur.* Not hippogriffins, sir, nor yet stag-goats,

Creatures you see on Persian hangings wrought.

When from your hands I first receiv'd the art,

And took her for my patient, she, poor thing,

Was sadly swollen with plethoric words

And tumid phrases : soon I brought her down

To something like condition, for I gave

Most potent purgatives, discourses, scraps

Of minstrelsy, and versicles, in pills,

And then prescrib'd a liquid draught of song,

A mild decoction strain'd from books ; and next,

Her now exhausted nature to support,



Us'd monodies, dash'd with Cephisophon.  
 Nor did I pounce upon, and to myself  
 Appropriate, whatsoever turn'd up first  
 In a chance-medley ; but, deliberate,  
 Would he expound to me the scheme entire  
 Of his own play. *Ba.* Much better than your own.

*Eur.* Then from the op'ning words I ne'er allow'd  
 An idle character ; my woman talk'd,  
 Or if it was a slave, 'twas all the same,  
 Or master, maiden, or old woman. *Æsch.* Aye,  
 And doing this did you not merit death ?

*Eur.* Nay, by Apollo, but so prov'd myself  
 True friend unto the people. *Ba.* Never mind,  
 There's no occasion to discuss that point.

*Eur.* Well, these I taught to speak. *Æsch.* To this I say,  
 'Twere better you had burst yourself in twain.

*Eur.* Subtle refinements introductory  
 I taught, to think, to see, to understand,  
 To plot, to warp, intrigue, and to suspect  
 All things soever. *Æsch.* That you did, I own.

*Eur.* Domestic objects I did not despise,  
 Nor keep that out of sight with which we have  
 Daily acquaintance ; and by these I would  
 Be tested, for I was not wont to swagger,  
 Fright'ning the audience out of half their wits,  
 Bringing fierce knights and Memnons on the stage,  
 Their horses' trappings deck'd with jingling bells.  
 'Tis easy to discern between us two  
 By looking to our diff'rent pupils ; his  
 You know, Phormisius and Megænetus,  
 Whisker'd-lance-trumpeters, a sneering set  
 Of bearded-braggadocio-bully-boys.  
 Now turn to mine, behold them—Cleitophon,  
 And my dear dainty friend Theramenes.

*Ba.* Theramenes, a clever fellow, that,  
If in a scrape he gets, soon wriggles out,—  
“ I spell me with a kappa, not a chi ;  
No Chian, but a Kian at your service.”

*Eur.* By arts such as these,  
That admonish and please,  
Taught I men to be wise,  
Since true wisdom lies  
In making them strive  
At home well to live.  
Now closely they look  
To a business affair,  
Saying, “ Who this has took ?  
What is this ? how ? and where ? ”

*Ba.* Each Athenian, 'tis true,  
Now instructed by you,  
When he enters his halls  
To his servants loud bawls,  
Hallo ! where's the pot  
Which last summer I got ?  
Who has broken the dish ?  
And the head of the fish——  
Why here's a sad coil,  
With the garlic and oil  
I bought yestreen to sup ;  
Who has dar'd eat them up ?

*Chorus.* These things you behold,  
O Achilles the bold.  
But now 'tis your turn,  
Though with fury you burn  
At his hard accusation,  
Yet restrain indignation ;  
When the tempest prevails,  
Take a reef in your sails,

So your bark o'er the tide  
 Smoothly, safely shall glide.  
 Now of bards thou the first,  
 Whom our Hellas has nurst,  
 That of fable and story,  
 The weak props of the stage,  
 With thy genius' bright glory  
 Didst embellish the page.

Like a fountain upspringing let thine eloquence burst.

*Æsch.* I am indignant at the bare idea  
 Of arguing with this fellow : but lest he  
 Pretend that I was silent not from choice  
 But from necessity, now answer me,  
 What in a poet should we most admire?

*Eur.* Why, cleverness, and giving good advice ;  
 In that, we make men better citizens.

*Æsch.* If you have done just the reverse of this,  
 And have, in lieu of honest noble men,  
 Held up to imitation and applause  
 A base adult'rous tribe, what penalty,  
 Think you, you merit? *Ba.* Death : don't ask him twice.

*Æsch.* Consider now what kind of men from me  
 You did receive : they were a gen'rous race,  
 Standing four cubits in their sandals, not  
 Runaway rascals, hucksters, arrant knaves,  
 Scum of the earth, but breathing sword and spear,  
 Whitecrested morions, hauberks, corslets, greaves,  
 And sevenfolded souls. *Ba.* Look out !—he'll crush  
 Us 'neath his helmet-foundry sure as fate.

*Eur.* And what have you to make men noble taught?

*Ba.* Speak, *Æschylus* ; though angry, don't maintain  
 That haughty silence. *Æsch.* I compos'd a play  
 Instinct with Mars. *Eu.* What's that? *Æs.* The Seven'gainst Thebes.  
 Why, not a man did see that play but went

Away ennobled in his soul, and felt  
 Himself a warrior. *Ba.* This was badly done,  
 You made the Thebans manlier in the fray <sup>20</sup>.  
 You should be beat for this. *Æsch.* And had not you  
 Athenians too the opportunity?  
 Ye were not apt for lessons such as this.  
 And next The Persians I brought out; at least  
 Unto my countrymen did I inspire  
 The wish to overcome the enemy,  
 Seeing I sang that glorious feat of arms.

*Ba.* Well, I rejoic'd when I did hear the death  
 Of old Darius, and the Chorus kept  
 Wringing their hands incessant, and pour'd forth  
 Shrill shrieks of lamentation, ai! ai! ai!

*Æsch.* These are the themes that poets should adopt.

Consider now from the world's early prime  
 How useful to their fellow men have been  
 True noble poets. Orpheus first of all  
 Bade us restrain from slaughter of our kind;  
 Musæus taught the cures to pestilence;  
 Then Hesiod told the culture of the earth,  
 The circling seasons and their varied fruits.  
 And why, I ask, did godlike Homer reap  
 Immortal honour? was it not because  
 He sang in noble stave the arm'd array,  
 The valiant exploits, glitt'ring panoply  
 Of heroes? *Ba.* Nathless Pantacles did not  
 Turn out a pupil promising of his.

Why, lately, when he had to give his show,  
 His helmet first upon his brow he donn'd,  
 And then a swinging horse-tail tied to it.

*Æsch.* Many well-taught could I enumerate:  
 Among them Lamachus; hence I myself  
 Did take some hints about Patroclus and

Courageous Teucer, for I wish'd to shew  
 To these the model of a citizen,  
 A man aye ready at his country's need  
 Whene'er he hear the clarion's warning call.  
 I took not Phædra, Stheneboea—whores.  
 No man can say in any play of mine  
 A woman falls in love. *Eur.* 'Tis true ; no spark  
 Of Venus' flame e'er cours'd within your veins.

*Æsch.* Granted ; but she has influenc'd you and yours  
 Much to your mischief. *Ba.* Undeniably.  
 The blow which you did aim at other men,  
 Seeking their wives, upon yourself recoil'd. <sup>21</sup>

*Eur.* How has my Stheneboea harm'd the state ?

*Æsch.* Why, noble ladies, wives of noble men,  
 You've caus'd themselves to poison, brought to shame  
 By your Bellerophons. *Eur.* Is it not true—  
 The story of my Phædra ? *Æsch.* Yes, 'tis true,  
 But what of that ? a poet should conceal  
 Disgraceful histories, not publish them  
 To all the world : a pedagogue is he  
 That schooleth children, poets grown up men  
 And sentiments of honour we should teach.

*Eur.* And so, because you tell us of the heights  
 Of Lycabettus, or the sacred cliffs  
 Of white Parnassus, this, forsooth, you say,  
 This sentiments of honour is to teach !  
 Methinks such teacher might just condescend  
 To speak in human phraseology.

*Æsch.* Pest on thee, scurvy jester ! this I mean—  
 Great minds should speak in corresponding terms.  
 I would not have a demigod use words  
 Like one of us, or wear such common clothes ;  
 But when I gave to these fine words, fine clothes,  
 You shew'd your spite at this. *Eurip.* Indeed ! how so ?

*Æsch.* Princes you made to go about in rags,  
 That they might raise compassion. *Eur.* And did this  
 Do harm? *Æsch.* Aye, not a soul, however rich,  
 Would fill the office of a trierarch,  
 But hawk'd his spurious poverty in rags.

*Ba.* By Ceres, yes, and underneath those rags  
 Would wear a costly tunic! when he thus  
 Had gull'd mankind, he'd to the market jaunt,  
 And order a prime turbot for his dinner.

*Æsch.* What with your stuff and nonsense, all the schools  
 Of manly exercise deserted are,  
 The rising generation mincing struts  
 Abroad, in morals thoroughly corrupt,  
 Conceited chatt'ring boys: the sailors too  
 The point must argue with their officers.  
 Why, in the good old times, when I was living,  
 Their stock of knowledge was compris'd in this—  
 To ask at mess for larger rations, or  
 Sing out their "Ryppapæ". *Ba.* Or run ashore  
 And rob a purse, or such-like harmless jokes;  
 But now they are sea-lawyers every one,  
 And when you bid them pull, they do demur.

*Æsch.* Is not his guilt flagrant,  
 Who the stage doth defile  
 With whore, pimp, and vagrant,  
 And such characters vile?  
 And, O most indecorous,  
 His women before us  
 Are in temples made mothers,  
 And they live with their brothers  
 As live husband and wife,  
 Saying, life is not life.  
 To this trash it is due,  
 That our city is cramm'd

With a monkey-like crew,  
 That deserve to be damn'd.  
 At home these are lurking,  
 When abroad they should fight,  
 And, their own duty shirking,  
 The poor people excite.  
 Woe for manhood ! not one  
 At the last Attic games,  
 Was in fit state to run  
 At the race of the flames. <sup>22</sup>

*Ba.* Jove ! I near split with laughing  
 At a fat paunchy fellow,  
 Who his wine had been quaffing  
 Till he got very mellow :  
 He was last in the races,  
 Making horrid grimaces.  
 At Ceramicus they like  
 A good practical joke ;  
 So his buttocks they strike,  
 And his side-bones they poke,  
 And they push him and cuff,  
 Till the wretch, in his fright,  
 Gave such a terrible puff,  
 That it put out his light.

*Chorus.*

Right bravely indeed  
 Does the contest proceed,  
 And fierce is the rattle  
 And the din of the battle.  
 The one presses hard  
 As determin'd to kill,  
 While his foe on his guard  
 Stands and parries with skill.  
 But to it unshrinking,  
 Let not the war slack,

## THE FROGS.

New devices of thinking,  
All resources ransack.  
Your strength again measure,  
Ye are nigh of a match,  
And the audience with pleasure  
Will the changing fight watch.  
Feel no hesitation  
That they won't understand,  
Vast strides education  
Now has made through the land.

*Eur.* Now to thy prologues I attention draw ;—

That first ingredient in the tragedy  
Of a good poet I'll proceed to test :  
In op'ning of a plot was he obscure ?

*Ba.* Which will you test ? *Eur.* O, there are plenty ; first,  
That of Orestes please repeat to us.

*Ba.* Now silence every one ! Speak, *Æschylus*.

*Æsch.* "Mercury, God of earth, that watchest o'er  
This my paternal kingdom, O be thou  
To me a suppliant, guardian and ally,  
Who to this land arrive, and am return'd."

*Ba.* Can you find any fault ? *Eur.* Yes, twelve or more.

*Ba.* Indeed ! Why, he has only said four lines.

*Eur.* Each single one of them has twenty faults.

*Ba.* I warn you to keep quiet, *Æschylus*—  
At present you have only spoke four lines—  
If not, you'll soon run up a pretty score.

*Æsch.* Shall I keep quiet for this fellow's threats ?

*Ba.* Yes, if you follow my advice. *Eur.* I'll prove  
That his mistakes are huge as is the space  
'Twixt heav'n and earth. *Æsch.* You see ! *Ba.* Well, as you will.

*Æsch.* How say you that I err ? *Eur.* Repeat again.

*Æsch.* "Mercury, God of earth, that watchest o'er  
This my paternal kingdom, O be thou—".



*Eur.* Is not Orestes speaking at the grave  
Of his dead father? *Æsch.* I dispute not that.

*Eur.* Well, seeing that his father died a death  
Of violence, slain by a woman's hand,  
Caught in the toils prepar'd by secret craft,  
How can he say that Mercury kept watch?

*Ba.* He does not mean the crafty Mercury,  
But him of Eriunium, God of luck.  
And this he shews quite plain, when he declares  
He has obtain'd his father's heritage.

*Eur.* Why, this is worse than ever; if he had  
Obtain'd his father's earthly heritage,  
He must—— *Ba.* Be a grave-robber, 'twould have been  
Flat burglary. *Æsch.* Bacchus, your jokes smell rank,  
I trust your wine's less musty than your wit.

*Ba.* Ha, ha! proceed——And you look out for blots.

*Æsch.* "To me a suppliant, guardian and ally,  
Who to this land arrive, and am return'd."

*Eur.* Here, Æschylus has said the same thing twice.

*Ba.* How twice? *Eur.* Yes, mark the phrases he employs,  
"Who to this land arrive, and am return'd,"  
"Arrive, and am return'd," are just the same.

*Ba.* As if a man unto his neighbour said,  
Lend me a cask, and, if you please, a barrel.

*Æsch.* Not so, thou chatt'ring witling, but it is  
A well-discriminating use of words.  
A man is said to come unto a land  
To whom there's no restriction in the way;  
An exile both arrives and does return.

*Ba.* Well turn'd, by Phœbus! Now, Euripides.

*Eur.* But I deny Orestes home return'd,  
For he came secretly, without the leave  
Of the then-ruling powers. *Ba.* Masterly hit!  
But what he means I don't quite understand.

*Eur.* And now go on. *Ba.* Yes, Æschylus, go on,——

Keep you a bright look out for any faults.

*Æsch.* “Here at his tomb do I my sire entreat

To hear and listen.” *Eur.* Stop! another blunder,——

“To hear and listen” clearly the same thing.

*Ba.* Tut, you wiseacre! Do you not perceive

He’s speaking to the dead? on whom three <sup>23</sup> times

We call, nor, after all, ourselves make heard.

*Æsch.* And how made you your prologues? *Eur.* You shall hear;

If ever I the same word mention twice,

Or any one can find in all my plays

An useless expletive, I’ll give him leave

To spit into my face. *Ba.* Well, let us hear.

*Eur.* “At first was Œdipus a prosp’rous man.”

*Æsch.* That I deny; he was an ill-starr’d wretch,

Whom, e’en before his birth, Apollo said

To slay his father was predestinate;

Aye, e’en before he was begotten! how

Could he at first have been a prosp’rous man?

*Ba.* Aye, afterwards most wretched he became.

*Æsch.* No, not a bit of it; he never had

A single check in his career of woe;

And that I’ll prove. Directly he was born,

On a cold winter’s day, he was expos’d

Upon a potsherd, lest he should grow up

To be his father’s murderer; and next,

Limping and lame, stumbling on Polybus,

He finish’d him; and afterwards, though young,

He an old woman married, who turn’d out

To be his mother: as a summing up

To all the rest, himself put out his eyes.

*Ba.* He had been truly blest, if he had serv’d

The last campaign with Erasinides. <sup>24</sup>

*Eur.* You jest; my prologues are quite excellent.

1195 *Æsch.* You think so, do you? I don't wish to carp  
At every single word, but, by the Gods,  
Your prologues I'll demolish utterly  
With a pint-bottle. *Eur.* What! you mean to say,  
With a pint-bottle you'll demolish mine?

*Æsch.* With one pint-bottle, neither more nor less.  
As you compose, 'tis easy to fit on  
A sheepskin, and pint-bottle, and a pouch  
To your iambics; I can give you proof.

*Eur.* I challenge you. *Æsch.* And I accept. *Ba.* Speak up.

*Eur.* "Ægyptus, so the common rumour runs,  
With fifty children in a long-oar'd boat,  
Landing near Argos"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost!

*Eur.* Curse the pint-bottle! shall he not rue this?

*Ba.* Give us another prologue; let me judge.

*Eur.* "Bacchus, who, clad in skins of dappled fawn  
Begirt by thyrsus-bearing votaries,  
In the pine forests of Parnassus bounds,  
Weaving light dances"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost!

*Ba.* Again has his pint-bottle hit us hard.

*Eur.* Well, never mind, 'twill be impossible  
To tack his damn'd pint-bottle on to this,—  
"No man existed, altogether blest,  
Born 'neath fair auspices he liv'd not long,  
Or else misfavour'd"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost!

*Ba.* Euripides. *Eur.* How now? *Ba.* You'd best strike sail;  
From that pint-bottle blows an awful blast.

*Eur.* By Ceres, I won't think of giving in:  
This time I will be fairly rid of it.

*Ba.* Proceed; but mind—'ware the pint-bottle, 'ware.

*Eur.* "Cadmus, Agenor's son, behind him left  
The town of Sidon"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost!

*Ba.* Buy his pint-bottle, man, buy it outright;  
It will be money well laid out; or else

'Twill spoil your prologues. *Eur.* What ! I buy of him ?

*Ba.* You'll do so, if you value my advice.

*Eur.* Not so ; for I have many prologues left,  
Where his confounded bottle can't come in.

" To Pisa Pelops, son of Tantalus,  
Borne on swift coursers"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost !

*Ba.* See, with his bottle he has capp'd your verse.

Come, *Æschylus*, sell him your bottle, fix  
Your price with him, and for an obolus  
You can a new one purchase, spick and span.

*Eur.* Not yet, by Jove ; I still have plenty left.

" From the land *Æneus*"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost !

*Eur.* Nay, that's foul play, let me complete the line,—

" From the land *Æneus* reap'd a plenteous crop,  
The first-fruits off'ring"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost !

*Ba.* What ! was it stolen from him, when engag'd

At his devotions ? monstrous sacrilege !

*Eur.* Ne'er mind, good friend, but let him speak to this—

" Great Jupiter the voice of truth declares"—

*Ba.* It is no good, he will confound you straight

With " His pint-bottle lost !" it comes quite apt

To all your prologues, and as natural

To them as warts to certain persons' eyes.

Yes, give it up, and have your fling at him.

*Eur.* Him will I prove to be extremely bad :

The pith and the quintessence now I'll give  
Of all his strains, for they are most diffuse,  
But I'll concentrate them, and bring them all  
Unto one head. *Ba.* And I'll the tally keep,  
And check them off as they come trooping in.

*Eur.* " O Phthian Achilles, hear'st thou not sounds of slaughter,

Wilt thou not come to our burthensome aid ?

We adore thee, O *Hermes*, we who dwell by the water,

Thou comest not yet to our burthensome aid."

*Ba.* A brace of burthens for you, *Æschylus*.

*Eur.* "Atrides, far ruler, of the Greeks chieftain glorious,  
Thou comest not yet to our burthensome aid."

*Ba.* Hark, there he goes, with burthen number third !

*Eur.* "I sing the emprize of great captains victorious,  
Why comest thou not to our burthensome aid?"

*Ba.* O royal Jupiter, this is too much,  
A murrain on your burthens ! I must go  
And have a bath, my kidneys ache quite sore  
Beneath th' infliction of those burthens four.

*Eur.* Nay, stop a minute, I'll rehearse to you  
Another distich of his rumbling verse,  
The metre fram'd on the strict bardic rule.

*Ba.* Well, say your say, but no more burthens, mind. [ry,

*Eur.* "Th' Achæan reign of sceptres twain, the flower of Grecian chival-  
With a phlattothrattophlattothrat. [is nigh,

The hell-hound dire, with fiendish ire, the dread remorseless Sphinx

With a phlattothrattophlattothrat. [in the sky,  
With spear and brand, and vengeful hand, the valiant bird swoops

With a phlattothrattophlattothrat.

A feast of blood to give her brood, and still her famish'd eaglets cry,

With a phlattothrattophlattothrat. [eye,  
While Ajax, lord of his good sword, surveys them with undaunted

With a phlattothrattophlattothrat."

*Ba.* Why, where the deuce got you your phlattothrat ?

From Marathon <sup>25</sup> ? is it a Persian word ?

Or fag end of a water-carrier's song ?

About its very length the rope that draws

Their buckets from the well. *Æsch.* Nay, I receiv'd

A subject fair, and then improv'd on it,

And left it fashion'd fairer from my hands.

I did disdain to crop the selfsame flowers

In the bright Muses' field, as Phrynichus.

This fellow here all kinds of harlotry

Stoops to adopt, Meletus' drinking catches,  
 And Carian ditties, dirges, dancing-jigs,  
 Jumbled together: but I'll shew you quick—  
 Hallo! a lyre let some one fetch me!—bah,  
 What need a lyre? I had forgot: are not,  
 Muse of Euripides, two scallop shells  
 Rattled together music good enough?  
 Come, listen, Muse, one of your own sweet strains  
 Will I recite. *Ba.* Has not his lady Muse  
 Play'd tricks as bad as naughty Sappho? eh?

*Æsch.* "Halcyon songsters, ye that roam  
 By the sad sea's restless wave,  
 And in pearly drops of foam  
 Your pinions' shining plumage lave,—  
 Spiders, that beneath the roof  
 In the corner of a room,  
 Whose fingers weave as fine a woof  
 As shuttle singing through the loom,—  
 Where the dolphin gladly leaping,  
 Rous'd by music from his sleep,  
 Gambols round the dark prows sweeping  
 The crystal bosom of the deep,—  
 Sing the honours of the vine,  
 When the luscious grape doth redden,  
 And the briskly circling wine  
 Man's sense of woe a while may deaden,  
 Throw, O child, thy arms about me."

Thou seest this foot? *Ba.* Aye, plain enough.

*Æsch.* And this thou seest too? *Ba.* Do not doubt me.

*Æsch.* Well, this is just the paltry stuff  
 Which he sings, yet dares impute  
 To my compositions blame,  
 And his own lyre to prostitute  
 To lewd Cyrene's deeds of shame.

What do you conceive of such?—

I'll treat you to another touch.

“ Blackbrow'd night from pit of gloom,

What fearful shape in sable stole

Send'st thou herald of my doom?

Is't a soul, yet not a soul?

See, the phantom dire advances,

At its aspect reason fails,

Death, O, death is in its glances,

It has long tremendous nails.

Trim, ye slaves, my lamp with oil;

From the stream in brazen chalice

Water bring, then let it boil,

And so disarm the spectre's malice.

God of Ocean! now the warning

I understand, who dares to mock?

Glycé did go out this morning,

She has absconded with my cock.

Mountain nymphs, pursue her! sitting

At my work, of coming sorrow

All unconscious, I was knitting,

To sell——'tis market-day to-morrow.

My cock, my cock, with swift wings cleaving

The firmament, has fled, has fled!

Grief, bitter grief, his mistress leaving,

Tears, idle tears, perforce I shed.

Ida's children, sons of Crete,

Grasp your bows and quivers sounding,

Stir your legs, in motion fleet,

The robber's lurking place surrounding.

Great Diana, huntress fair,

Set your hounds on Glycé's track;

Jove-born Hecaté, a pair

Of candles light, seek, bring her back.”

*Ba.* Give over now the strain. *Æsch.* I've had enough.

Suppose we take him to the weighing-stand,  
Which shall decide on our respective claims,  
For that will test the weight of what we say.

*Ba.* Well, be it so, if needs be I must weigh  
Th' accomplishments of poets like to you,  
As though they were so many pounds of cheese.  
Now stand close by the balance. *Æs. & Eu.* Here we are !

*Ba.* Well, now let each begin—a verse recite,  
And do not stop until I shall call out.

*Eu. & Æs.* We're ready. *Ba.* Well then, speak into the scales.

*Eur.* Would that the Argive bark had never wing'd.

*Æsch.* Stream of Spercheius, haunts of grazing kine——

*Ba.* Stop ! stop ! the scale of *Æschylus* descends,  
Yours kicks the beam. *Eur.* And what's the cause of this ?

*Ba.* Because he introduc'd a stream ; and so  
His words he moisten'd, as a merchant rogue  
Does wet his wool to make it heavier weigh.

*Eur.* Well then, let each stand by and try again.

*Ba.* Now, are you ready ? *Æs. & Eur.* Ready—yes. *Ba.* Then off !

*Eur.* Persuasion has no other shrine save speech.

*Æsch.* Death is the only God that won't take bribes——

*Ba.* Stop ! Now you see his scale again goes down ;  
He puts in death, the heaviest of all ills.

*Eur.* And I persuasion, a well chosen word.

*Ba.* Persuasion's but light ware, without much sense.  
Come, try and get some pond'rous thumping phrase  
That will at once the business do for you.

*Eur.* What like ? advise me, prithee, what to say.

*Ba.* “A main Achilles threw, four and a deuce.”——  
But talk you on, this contest sadly lags.

*Eur.* Heavy with iron was the club he seiz'd.

*Æsch.* Chariot on chariot, corse on corse was pil'd.

*Ba.* See ! he has got the best again. *Eur.* How so ?



*Ba.* Two chariots and two corpses popp'd he in ;  
A hundred men of Egypt <sup>26</sup> won't lift those.

*Æsch.* No longer word by word will I contend,  
But get you straight into the scales, yourself,  
Your wife, your children, and Cephisophon,  
With all your books ; I on the other hand  
Will only speak two words of mine, and beat you.

*Ba.* My friends, I do not like to judge between  
These two, for I feel friendly unto both ;  
One I hold wise, the other pleases me.

*Pl.* Then will you nothing do for which you came ?

*Ba.* But if I judge ? *Pl.* Then take the one you choose,  
And go ; you will not then have come in vain.

*Ba.* That's fair ; I thank you : listen to me now.  
I came here for a poet. *Eur.* Yes, what for ?

*Ba.* Why, that the city, by his counsels sav'd,  
May act her choric shows in peace ; which-e'er  
Of you prescribe the fittest remedy,  
Him will I take, methinks. Come, tell me first  
What think you each of Alcibiades ? <sup>27</sup>  
The lab'ring city heaves with anxious throes.

*Eur.* What are her sentiments concerning him ?

*Ba.* That's a hard question ; as she all at once  
Fondly regrets and hates, and wants him back.  
But what think *you* of him ?—I wish to know.

*Eur.* I hate that citizen, by nature slow  
To help his native land, but swift to harm,  
Full of resources for his private weal,  
Deficient in expedients for the state.

*Ba.* Well said, by Neptune ! What do you conceive ?

*Æsch.* 'Tis hazardous to rear a lion's cub  
At home ; yet if you do, then break him in.

*Ba.* Now this is puzzling ; one has spoken well,  
The other honestly. I'll try again.

Will you both be so good as to expound  
What scheme you have to save the city with?

*Eur.* Suppose Cinesias be a pair of wings,  
You clap him on Cleocritus's back,  
Then let them sail in air right out to sea.

*Ba.* 'Twould be a curious sight, no doubt; but in  
The name of common sense what does it mean?

*Eur.* Why, don't you see? there is a naval fight;  
Above they hover, and squirt vitriol down  
Into the eyelids of the enemy—  
Well, well I know, and I could speak. *Ba.* Pray speak.

*Eur.* When we what faithless is do faithful hold,  
And what is faithful faithless— *Ba.* Really, now  
I cannot comprehend: for goodness' sake,  
Less learnedly and rather plainer talk.

*Eur.* Should we distrust those citizens in whom  
We now place confidence, and counsel ask  
Of them whose counsel we have slighted long,  
Haply we yet may be preserv'd; for how,  
If acting as we do we fare so ill,  
Doing the converse, shall we not improve?

*Ba.* A very Palamedes! Did you this  
Yourself discover, or Cephisophon?

*Eur.* Nay, it was I myself; but I confess  
The vitriol was Cephisophon's idea.

*Ba.* And what say you? *Æsch.* What think you of the men  
The city now employs for ministers?  
Think you that they are honourable men?

*Ba.* Why, you surprise me; she detests such men.

*Æsch.* What! she delights in rascals? *Ba.* No, not that  
Exactly, but perforce employs she them.

*Æsch.* O, who can hope to save a state like this,  
That blows both hot and cold? *Ba.* Try, I implore,  
That she resume her once proud attitude.

*Æsch.* There will I speak, but here I do not choose.

*Ba.* Nay, hence a message of good tidings send.

*Æsch.* Bid them consider, then, all hostile land  
 Their own, and their own land as hostile ground,  
 Their army's march to be on ocean's wave,  
 That their true strength consists in ships, and lack  
 Of their forc'd revenue to be true strength <sup>29</sup>.

*Ba.* Well said ; for, as it is, the money goes  
 In lawyers' fees. *Pl.* I pray you now decide.

*Ba.* Now presently shall judgment be, for I'll  
 Choose him to whom my secret soul inclines.

*Eur.* Remember now the Gods whom you invok'd  
 Your oath to sanction, and take me your friend.

*Ba.* My tongue did swear <sup>29</sup>, but I choose *Æschylus*.

*Eur.* What hast thou done, accurs'd ? *Ba.* Who, I ? I say  
 That *Æschylus* has conquer'd : pray, why not ?

*Eur.* And dar'st thou look me in the face, who dost  
 This most disgraceful deed ? *Ba.* Disgraceful ! how  
 Can that be, if the public don't so think ?

*Eur.* Ah, cruel ! wilt neglect me now I'm dead ?

*Ba.* Why, who can tell if death is not to live ?  
 To breathe the air, to sup ? and sleep itself  
 A good warm blanket ? *Pl.* Come, I pray, within,  
 That I may feast you two before you go.

*Ba.* Some sense in that ! I come with greatest pleasure.

#### CHORUS.

Thrice blest the man to whom high heav'n,  
 Its choicest gift, has wisdom giv'n ;  
 His task it is to educate,  
 By counsel to instruct the state ;  
 Dear to his kinsmen and his friends,  
 To lead them on to noble ends  
 By noble means. O, we rejoice

The arbiter of thee made choice,  
 And not of him who sought to please  
 The shallow sophist Socrates<sup>31</sup> :  
 Despising in his inmost heart  
 The highest attributes of art,  
 In envious gibes and cavils trading,  
 All that is great and good degrading.

*Pl.* Farewell, my Æschylus, farewell,  
 And happiness aye with thee dwell.  
 Endeavour to preserve our city,  
     And her senseless scions school ;  
 Athens numbers, more's the pity,  
     'Mid her children many a fool.  
 To Cleophon this message give,  
     Nicomachus, and all that set,  
 Whose time is up, no more to live,  
     But come to me. If they forget,  
 By Jove, I'll fetch them ; first my brand  
     Imprint, that honest men may know them,  
 Then I'll tie them foot and hand,  
     Down to my lowest region throw them.

*Æsch.* This thy pleasure shall be done,  
 And do thou give up my throne  
 To Sophocles to keep for me ;  
 He will preserve it faithfully  
 Till I return ; but O, do thou  
     Remember this my last petition—  
 Never this wicked man allow,  
     This vile fomenter of sedition,  
 To place his worthless person in it,  
 Although it be but for a minute.

*Pl.* Let your flick'ring torches brighten,  
     Like reeling stars through night's domain,

The poet on his path-way lighten,  
Salute him with a parting strain.

## CHORUS.

Yes, joy to the bard unto daylight returning,  
Escort him, ye Gods subterranean, and elves,  
May peace to our city bring back arts and learning,  
Let Cleophon's friends fight it out by themselves!

## NOTES.

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<sup>1</sup> Slaves were sometimes allowed thus to gain their freedom, though great jealousy of them existed. Thucydides briefly relates a startling anecdote of 2000 slaves at Sparta, who had distinguished themselves in the war, being presented with their freedom, invited to a banquet on the occasion, and murdered.

<sup>2</sup> Ἔρνος, properly a vegetable pudding.

<sup>3</sup> Here were held the Παναθήναια, games at which were run races, the competitors carrying torches. A scene perhaps not unlike the "senza moccilo" of a Roman carnival.

<sup>4</sup> An ass carried the sacred vessels used in the mysteries, from Athens to Eleusis.

<sup>5</sup> Tænarus, now Cape Matapan; supposed by the ancients to be the entrance to Hades.

<sup>6</sup> Περὶ τῶν κρεῶν. One of the most disputed passages in the book; but it probably refers to Arginusæ, after which victory the Athenian commanders were impeached and condemned for not having paid proper funeral honours to their slain. The ophthalmia mentioned in the next line was probably a current excuse for not serving.

<sup>7</sup> The contrast is amusing between the ideal Iacchus, the ἁπαῖος θεός, and the fat Silenus-like Bacchus brought on the stage, the butt of the piece.

<sup>8</sup> I have given the proper pronunciation to Ægīnā, as it is still called by the Greeks.

<sup>9</sup> Πολλὴ ὁδός, the long straight road from Athens to Eleusis. Throughout these choruses perpetual allusion is made to the Eleusinian mysteries, between

which and the fancied state of the dead inhabitants of Elysium a vague connection seems hinted at.

<sup>10</sup> Archedemus was a foreigner, who, after seven years' residence, wished to be inscribed in a *φράτρα* or ward, and thereby acquire the full privileges of an Athenian citizen, viz. the power of voting and speaking. Aristophanes therefore compares him to a child *ὃς οὐκ ἔφυσε φράτρας* (curiales), punning on the latter word for *φραστῆρας*, dentes qui ad loquendum sunt utiles.

<sup>11</sup> \**Ἡ Διὸς Κόρυθος*, said to be a proverb for constant repetition.

<sup>12</sup> Cleon the celebrated demagogue was the object of Aristophanes' peculiar aversion; he therefore selects him as a first-rate bully in hell.

<sup>13</sup> The ridiculous custom of allowing slaves to be tortured, in order from their silence or confession to prove their masters' innocence or guilt, is here glanced at.

<sup>14</sup> *Io* and *Iattatai*, related to be habitual exclamations of the spectators at the Herculean and Equestrian games.

<sup>15</sup> Cleophon was of Thracian origin by his mother.

<sup>16</sup> When the votes were equal, a prisoner was acquitted. I have here omitted a large part of the chorus which had no direct bearing on the play, but contains references to the state of political parties in Athens.

<sup>17</sup> In the original, the style of Æschylus is imitated in this chorus.

<sup>18</sup> The custom of sailors before a storm.

<sup>19</sup> More properly, I imagine, painted figures on the ships, as the Chinese junks appear to be ornamented.

<sup>20</sup> *Æschylum vituperat Bacchus quod in Septem ad Thebas dramate Thebanos fortiores Argivis exhibuerit; sed alio sensu verba ista accipit Æschylus inde occasionem sumens Athenienses carpendi ob neglectum bellicarum artium studium.* Brunck. Not. in *Ranas*.

<sup>21</sup> The Scholiast here gives some scandal of the 500th century B. C.

<sup>22</sup> See note 3.

<sup>23</sup> At funerals they thrice invoked the dead—three was a mystic number—ter injecto pulvere. Horace.

<sup>24</sup> Erasinides was one of the commanders at Arginusæ, see note 6.

<sup>25</sup> Æschylus fought and highly distinguished himself at Marathon.

<sup>26</sup> I presume the Egyptians were capable of carrying great weights, and perhaps the word became almost equivalent to porter, as Gallegos in Spain.

<sup>27</sup> Then in exile.

<sup>28</sup> In text *ἔχοντες ὀξέϊδας*, having vinegar cruets.

<sup>29</sup> This was the advice of Pericles, to abandon their land to the inroads of

the enemy, and to trust entirely to their naval supremacy. The tribute raised by Athens from other states, on the original ground of maintaining a navy to repel Persian invasion, was a great source of complaint against her, and the main cause of the Peloponnesian war.

<sup>30</sup> The last answers of Bacchus to Euripides are quotations and parodies from his own works.

<sup>31</sup> It is almost needless to observe, that the estimate formed by Aristophanes both of Euripides and of Socrates is most unjust.



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